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A Weekly Publication

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SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE SUBJECTS OF VOL. III. THUS FAR PUBLISHED ARE

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| I. WATCHFULNESS. | X. THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME. |
| II. PAUL AND DEMETRIUS. | XI. NATIONAL UNITY. |
| III. CONSOLATIONS OF THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST. | XII. SOCIAL OBSTACLES TO RELIGION. |
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ANY BACK NUMBERS CAN BE FURNISHED.

COMING TO ONE'S SELF.

"And when he came to himself."—LUKE XV. 17.

From the exquisite parable of the Prodigal Son, I have selected this fragment, because it is like an orifice opened, through which you see some of the profoundest operations of the human heart.

Consider the history that this fable or parable details, and the point at which this utterance was made. The young man had claimed his full liberty, and the means of conducting life according to his own notion. He declared himself free, and went off from his father, bearing with him such portion of the estate as belonged to him, or would belong to him, in order that he might live according to his own desire. He did conduct his life according to his own desire. He went through a *brilliant career*, as it is often styled; that is, a career in which every passion was made to scintillate, and flash light and warmth. The career worked itself out to the very dregs, showing both parts of itself—its beginning and its termination. At the last, poverty, beggary, degradation, hunger, and finally despair, took the place of wild intoxication and lawless pleasure; and then he was as wretched as before he had been happy.

The implication is, that in this whole career—the breaking away from his father's house; the going into disallowed society; the pursuing of courses that violated every principle of morality and of honor,—he had not acted in accordance with his true nature. He had abandoned himself. He had left his manhood somewhere behind. There was something that had been left out, or forsaken. And when his wretchedness had humbled him, so that he clearly saw his course in its true light, and began to change it, or to purpose to change it, it is said that he began to *come to himself*. He came to himself, though it were but for a moment.

We may interpret this as we use the term familiarly, as where a man is out of his head, out of his mind, and we say when his reason is restored that he has *come to himself* again. Or, when a man comes

out of a swoon, he is said to *come to himself*, by which is meant, simply, that he comes to the possession and use of faculties that for a time were clouded, or hindered in their operation.

You may also use it in a broader sense; and it is thus that I propose to use it. It may be made to throw much light on the course which men are pursuing at large—even those who do not indulge in passionate excesses, and in the wallow of the appetites.

It is proper that we should determine what a man's manhood is; what it is that is *man*, in man. Not everything. There is a difference between men and the animated creation, a part of which they are. They are said to be the head of the animal creation. By virtue of what? Why are they different? In what does that difference consist? In determining this, it is proper that we should characterize every one by that which is the highest and best in him. If you wished to define or characterize a king, it is not those things which he has in common with all his subjects that you would employ, but those things which separate him from others, and put him in distinction from them. If you are attempting to describe a philosopher, you mention those things which are peculiar to a philosopher. It is not that he eats, and drinks, and sleeps, that makes him a philosopher; for all men do these things. Fools do, and idiots do, as well as he. You are to single out those things which make him a philosopher, in order to characterize him. This is perfectly right. It is the common sense way of distinguishing all men.

Now, in determining a man's true nature and position, the same rule is fair. What our manhood is, is determined, not by the things which we have in common with the great mass of animated creation, but by those things which lift us higher than they, marking us as superior to them. We come all the way up in physical organization with the myriad tribes that fly, or swim, or creep, or walk. It is not those things that we have in common with them which make our manhood. We have all those same appetites and passions by which they maintain life; by which they fight off their enemies; by which they secure, in the struggle of life, the means of existence. We and they are just alike in those respects. And it is not fair to attempt to determine our manhood by the things which we have in common with the ass, with the ox, with the lion, or with the serpent. We must rise higher than the things which are possessed by these creatures, in order to find out what manhood is in man.

Looking at it in this light, the first thing that I will mention, as discriminating men from every other part of creation, and as constituting a portion of their true manhood, is their reason—and that in two aspects.

First, let us consider it as a governing light and power. I believe the superior animals have the germs or rudiments of reason. There is no question that the dog does, in a very limited way, reason, and that the elephant does, and that the horse does. And that reason in these animals is of the same general kind as the human reason, I do not doubt. But it is very limited, very low, and only occasional. In them it does not serve as a guide, and it is only now and then that it acts at all; whereas in man reason is a light that, shining, shines all the time, growing brighter and brighter, and more and more comprehensive, and entering into every part of his life, determining choices, likes and dislikes, aims and ends, and is a governing influence.

The other view which we are to take of reason, is that by its force we are able to prophesy. That is to say, experience does lay a foundation by which a man may judge from the results of certain causes to-day what will be the results of those causes to-morrow. For instance, if last year, sowing, we derived such and such results, we prophesy that if we sow this year we shall derive the same results. We have not a reason that prophesies in respect to indeterminate things of which we have no ordinary experience; but within the range of cause and effect the human reason is prophetic, so that a man is able to connect all his life together. And this it is which distinguishes between the human and brute reason more significantly than anything else. A horse, so far as we can see, lives only from day to day. There is no token that he thinks of to-morrow. He certainly does not think of next week, or next month. There is a sort of rude prevision or caution in some animals—in the beaver, for instance. We cannot see what are its metes and bounds; but we see that there are the rudiments of what in the human animal is prophetic reason—that power by which men carry, through a long life, a complex organization, each of whose parts acts upon every other part.

Here, then, is one grand distinguishing trait of manhood which stands separated from the whole animal kingdom around about us. We have a volume and potency of reason which belongs to no other animals; and that is one of the constituent elements of our manhood. The reason that looks before and after; the reason that takes cognizance both of things seen and things invisible; the reason that recognizes parts and relations and qualities, and so works by the senses, and above the senses, in a higher sphere—this is manhood reason.

The next constituent element of a true manhood is moral sense, or a constitution by which the soul recognizes moral obligations, from which, by a comparison of the performance of our life, measured by obligation, we come to understand the qualities of right and wrong; to accept a higher standard of obligation than mere self-will, or

than mere self-indulgence and pleasure. There is no evidence that animals ever have a conception of right and wrong. They have, of pleasure and pain. They fear the one, and desire the other. That seems to be the limit. And all the choices of animals vibrate simply between the senses of pleasure and pain.

It is not so in man. We lift ourselves far above that. Every reasonable man in an ordinarily well instructed community is conscious that right-and-wrong has a vast sphere, and that he acts from day to day in reference to those beneath him and those above him, in reference to property, and reputation, and name, and mutual service, and all manner of things, by a subtle operation within him of the moral sense; and that there is a principle of right or wrong. However much he may neglect it, however imperfect its operations may become, that quality is there; and it is that quality which distinguishes between the human race and the animal races beneath. It is not merely that we have reason, but that we have a reason which busies itself in attempting to adjust this great element of right and wrong.

Then we have one more characteristic—a spiritual nature—an endowment of sentiments which inspire the idea of purity, of self-denial, of holy love, of supersensuousness. I prefer the term *supersensuous* to the term *supernatural*; for I hold that religion is just as natural as nature itself, and that of the spiritual intuitions of the soul the highest are conformable to the law of nature—of higher nature.

There is no evidence that the animal kingdom have the first gleam or intimation of spiritual influence. This is peculiar to man. And in the human race it is the lowest and the least in those that are said to be nearest to nature—that is, nearest to mere physical nature; and it develops just in the ratio of civilization. There can be no civilization that does not augment reason in both respects—as a light, and as prophecy. There can be no civilization that does not augment the moral sense. There can be no civilization that does not augment the spiritual nature, giving to man a higher upper-life; giving him more of the qualities of love and hope and faith, and of fine discrimination in these superior and ultimate moral states.

I might argue—and fairly, I think—that these best things are always, in the order of nature, latest. That is, as everything comes to its fullest value last, an observation of the law of development would show that, as reason comes earliest, the moral sense next, and the spiritual faculties last, so this is the order of superiority; and the manhood of a man lies, highest in his spiritual influence, next in his moral sentiments, and lowest in his reason. But in all these three—in this trinity of qualification—he stands distinguished above all his fellows in the great animated kingdom of the world. He is superior to them be-

cause he is a creature of reason, and moral sentiments, and spiritual endowments.

It is in these things, then, that our manhood lies. It does not lie in the fact that we are erect. It does not lie in the fact that we are called *men*. It lies in the fact that we have, in distinction from every other creature that we know of on the globe, a superior and prophetic reason, guiding life, and connecting all parts of it together in symmetry and in purpose; that we have conceptions of right and wrong which fit us to live in infinite complications with our fellow men, and still observe the law of love and the law of their happiness; and that we have relations to another life beyond this, supersensuous, above the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, wherein the soul can even here begin to take hold of invisible beings, invisible qualities, and invisible states, and know itself to be a child of God and of immortality.

It is in this higher range of faculties, thus very briefly, compendiously defined, that a man is to look for his manhood. You are a man by as much as you have this particular part developed. You are less than a man just in the proportion in which you recede and shrink from this kind of measuring. As you would never think of measuring a musician by considering what he was as a draftsman, or what he was as a mathematician, but by considering what he was as a musician; as you would measure him by those qualities which belong to a musician; so in measuring manhood, you must take those qualities which are constituent in manhood, and judge by them.

Since one's manhood, or his true self, is to be found in his nobler attributes, and in his true spiritual relations, he who leaves these unused, and lives in the lower range of faculties, may be truly said to have forsaken himself. He has gone down out of himself into that which was a supplementary nature, an auxiliary part. He has left that nature of reason, and that nature of moral sense, and that nature of spirituality, which constituted his manhood, and has given himself up to the range of the senses. And that is the way the bird lives. That is the way the brute creation lives. He and they alike live for the gratification of the appetites and the passions.

It does not require that a man should become an assassin, or a mighty criminal, before it can be said that he is unnatural. Every man that teaches himself to find the chief employments and enjoyments of his manhood lower than in his reason and moral sentiments and spiritual nature, has forsaken himself. Every man whose business is manual and physical, and who contents himself with that business, and feeds himself by nothing higher than that, is a creature that is spending his life forces lower than the level of true manhood. It is not a misfortune

to be a mechanic ; but it is a misfortune to be only a mechanic. It is not a misfortune to be a farmer, but it is a misfortune to be nothing but a farmer. It is not a misfortune to be a mariner, or a day-laborer ; but the man that labors, working with his hands, and never thinks any higher than his work, is unfortunate. It is a misfortune for a man to have abandoned his manhood so that the operations of his mere physical frame shall satisfy him. All the upper realm of such a man's nature has been shut up. That which distinguishes him in the creation of his Father ; that which gives him the right to say, "Our Father," is all disused. It is as if a man, inheriting a magnificent palace, should shut up every one of the numerous apartments except the eating-room, and there live and feed.

How many there are that are laborious, and live, as the great mass of the human family must live, by the mere exercise of mechanical power ! And that is not a misfortune necessarily. But how many men are satisfied with that ! How many are contented to work, and to think just enough to get that which they shall eat and drink, and a place to eat and sleep, and a place for a little low social merriment ! Their whole ambition in life is filled by these few things. They care for nothing more and for nothing further. It is that which is a misfortune. It is a misfortune that a man should have no strong ambition to make him feel that he must have something more than the animal has—mere mechanism. It is not for a man to be simply a machine. It is not for him to be content with that. It is for him to desire knowledge. It is for him by knowledge to have a larger function. It is for him to have moral sentiment. It is for him to strike through life higher and nobler conceptions and impulses. It is for him to seek out above his work, or by his work, or beyond his work, something that the soul can enjoy—something for the reason ; something for the imagination ; something for the moral and spiritual sentiments. That is the business of every man, no matter how poor he is. That is one reason, I think, why God has given us so much to know in nature—for nature is a man's library who knows how to seek for knowledge. Nature is every man's picture gallery who knows how to hunger after and appreciate beauty. Nature is every man's portfolio, and herbarium, and garden. Nature is full of instruction to those who have a heart for knowledge.

He, therefore, who lives so far down that his trade or profession satisfies him, is living below his manhood, and is unfortunate. And how much more unfortunate is he, if he lives in his appetites and passions, and neglects even utility. That is low enough. And if he is dissipated, and gives himself up to animal inclinations, wherein is he to be distinguished from the swine ? He that roots and eats, filling his belly

only to lie in swinish filth and stupidity till hunger inspires him again —wherein does he show himself superior to the animals that do the same thing? Wherein is a man, though he is royally endowed, higher than the brutes, if he lives as they live?

The great multitude of men do live outside of, or below, their true nature. I mean not merely those who pervert it in the ways which I have been describing, but even those who pursue the ordinary avocations of respectable life. If they examine themselves, they will find that they set up aims which in the main are to please their pride and vanity and selfishness. Their great purposes in life do not rise to the supersensuous. I apprehend that if men were to sit down and write out what they mean to do and what they mean to be, the greater part of them, when they came to measure their aims by any high, true spiritual standard, would be ashamed to see how ignoble those aims are. The thing that is aimed at mostly in our day, is money. In our day men "seek their fortune." It has come to be almost a maxim, that men go into life to "seek their fortune;" to build themselves up; to get that which they think will make all men obey them, and respect them, and please them, and honor them. It is pride, vanity, avarice, love of property, in the main, that men set up as the end of life: not true manhood; not the power of wisdom; not the power of goodness; not the power of obedience to divine commands; not the power of benefaction; but the simple power of gratifying self-love, in one way and another.

Look, young men, at the scheme that you have laid out for yourselves, at what you mean to do and mean to be, and see if the aim of your life goes much higher than that which I have shown you. It is your purpose to pander to some form of selfishness—social selfishness, civil selfishness, or individual selfishness. And yet that does not reach high enough to touch even the lowest level of manhood. It leaves you still aiming at things which lie outside of true manhood.

The forces which men employ are largely forces which spring from their lower nature. The judgments which they apply to themselves, as prospering or not prospering, are judgments which are derived from this lower way of looking at manhood. I hear men spoken of as being very greatly prospered whose prosperity will not bear looking into. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of their moral sense. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of all refinement and delicacy. They are prospered; but it is by the sacrifice of their nobler natures. They are prospered! What do you mean by that? That they range high among men in this world, and have money, influence, power, physical excellence. Men say that a man is prospered because he has become strong and rich in these lower elements. On the other hand,

a man that has gone through sickness, and bankruptcy, and severe trials that pruned him on the right and on the left, and beat him down, until he has become patient, contented, lowly, disinterested, and is far more like his Master than ever before—such a man, instead of being regarded as prosperous, is looked upon with pity, and men say of him, “He is a ruined man!” As if, a man’s boat having sunk, and he having swum to the shore, and standing strong on the land, people should say, “He is gone!” No, he is saved! His boat is lost, but not he.

All that is worth saving in manhood is that which belongs to the reason, the moral sense, and the spiritual element. There is many and many a man that has been beaten as the flail beats the straw; and the straw and the chaff have been left behind, and the wheat has been kept and put into the granary; and the men have cried as though the wheat were being left behind, and they had got nothing.

Do not men measure themselves by these false and low standards? Do they not aim at things that lie outside of the true sphere of manhood? Do they bring into operation forces and form judgments which show that they do not live outside of themselves?

Men, whenever they look into these things seriously, see and realize that their real manhood sits in judgment upon their ordinary life. If I were to preach to you to-day the doctrine of total depravity, many of you would say, “It is right,” and go to sleep, and many of you would say, “It is wrong,” and resist it; according to the way in which you have been educated, and according to your temperament and disposition. If I were to say that all men are sinful, and were to take the old-fashioned track, you would be somewhat interested, perhaps, for the moment, but most of you would say, “It may be theologically true; but, after all, it is an overcharged statement.” And yet, is there one of you who can take his life and disposition, and bring them into judgment before his higher self; before his dispassionate reason, and justify them? Is there one of you who can say that every day his reason, at evening, looks back and approves everything that he has done? Is there one of you that does not sit in condemnation at the bar of his own judgment every single day that he lives? This first element of your higher nature, if active, is sufficient to keep you habitually under condemnation to yourselves. Your lower nature is carrying on life in such a way that the very first element of your true manhood condemns it: not in single things, but in innumerable things. Do we not all the time say, “We ought to be more under the guidance of our reason; but our feelings carry us away”? People are continually saying, “Oh! that I knew how to be more *reasonable*, that I might not make so many mistakes.” Men, talking among themselves about human life, independent of theology, and without bias, admit that they act irration-

ally, seeking things of less value rather than of higher value; indulging feelings that ought not to be indulged; doing things to-day that they know they will be sorry for to-morrow; over-eating or under-sleeping; violating the laws of body or mind in a multitude of ways. They are continually conducting the affairs of life in ways that their experience teaches them to be mischievous. They are convinced of it. They cannot help knowing it. There is not a single man here to-day, who, if I should put the question to him, "Do you not live so as to be at odds with your better reason?" would not be obliged to admit that he does. If I were to call upon those to raise their hands who act in consonance with their reason, is there one of you that could hold up his hand? And if there was one that did raise his hand, would you not laugh at him, every one of you, and say, "No, he does not act so"?

Take a step higher. Do you live habitually, in your ordinary affairs, in your social intercourse, in the things that you seek and the things that you avoid, according to the dictates of your moral sense? Are you conscious that you bring to bear upon your conduct the great moral measurements, the rights and the wrongs, that have been determined by the holiest experiences of the best men of the world, and have come down to us in the records of God's word, as God's best judgments expressed through such experiences through thousands of years? Do you live in accord with them? Are you uniformly generous, uniformly unselfish, uniformly true? Is your life straight? Is your path from day to day a line drawn as true as a rule could draw it? Are you *right-eous*, or are you *unright-eous*? Measure your life by this higher moral sentiment. Is there a man who does not know that his life will not bear any such measurement as that? Every man says, "There is not a faculty that, when it acts, does not act crookedly." Take any single one of your feelings and watch it for a single day, and you will find it to be so.

When the shipmaster is steering across the sea, all the time keeping his eye upon the compass, and holding the vessel as near as he can to an exact line, it seems to him that he is running in a straight line; but he is far from it. I looked with great interest at the charts that were laid out for those yachts that crossed the ocean. They undertook to draw the shortest line between New York and Liverpool; and it seems, when you look at the record of their observations, as though they ran up and down, constantly, going in anything but a straight line, although they thought at the time that they were following a direct course.

Let a man take any one of his feelings, and chart it from day to day, and follow it, and see how zig-zag it goes; how out of proportion it is; how it is deficient here and in excess there. There is not a man

who is not obliged to say, "If I measure by this second element of manhood, I am all the time living below my manhood, and out of tune with myself."

But if you bring in the life to come, the consciousness of God ever-present, the considerations which spring from the sweet, and pure, and blessed life of holiness and love in the heavenly land; if you measure by that, there is no use of talking about it. We know so little of it that it seems like the filniest cloud. It is not, for instance, enough, in our conception, to be used as a rule or measure. The higher men go up in true manhood, the less do they find in their practical life to please themselves withal, and flatter themselves withal, and justify themselves withal, and the more do they see that they are living lower than the line which separates between the animal and the man. Most men live below that equatorial line. Very few men get above it; and they get but a very few degrees above it. And there is not a man living, who, if he takes true manhood, and measures himself by it, will not be obliged to say, I am altogether sinful.

My dear friends, I do not care on what theory you philosophize. I am not anxious that you should believe in sin as defined by the Arminian or the Calvinist. I do not wish to impose upon you any old or new philosophy. The main thing is that men should have such a conception of their inferiority, and of the lowness at which they are living, that they shall be brought into the conscious need of succor and help. It is for this that I am preaching. You are living below your true manhood. It is only once in a while that you come to yourself. You do once in a while.

When a truly eminent Christian man dies, and the sound of life is for a short time hushed, all your better feelings lay down their warlike feathers, and there rises up in your soul a consciousness, an ideal, of what you ought to be, and how you ought to live, for a single moment, it may be, or a single hour.

I have seen men come over from their business in New York, to attend the funeral of a brother—of some eminent Christian—and shed tears in this house. When, for instance, Brother Corning was buried, I saw hard faced men cry. And I know what we should hear such men say if we could listen to their conversation as they walk away on such occasions. "Dear brother," says one, "we have been working for money; but that is not the main thing. It is only a little while that it can do us any good." "That is true," says another. "We must die soon. It will not be long before there will be just such a funeral for us. And are we ready?" And so these two men, gray-haired, it may be, very simple and very much in earnest, give expression to their feelings as they go down to Fulton Ferry. And as they

cross over they say to themselves, "I will think of these things, and try to carry the impression of them with me." But when they go up the street on the other side they meet this man and that man, and their minds are distracted from these serious thoughts; and when they get back into their counting-room they forget all about them. They did think they would tell their wives all about it when they got home at night; but, when at the supper-table, they were asked, "Husband, did you go to the funeral to-day?" they said, "Yes." "Was it a good funeral?" "Very, very." That was all they had to say about it! And yet, they had had a revelation. They had *come to themselves*, though it was but for an hour.

There is many a man, tired, weary, who strays away from his business, and, it may be, falls in at some concert room. Not in all natures, but in some, the imagination is stirred by music, and as they listen they are affected. They think it simply pleases them; but it does more than that. It wins them, and lifts them into finer thoughts and higher regions of contemplation. There is many a man who, as he has listened to music, has dreamed dreams, and had tears run down his cheeks. And people observing his emotion, would ask, "What! does Mendelssohn affect you?" and starting up, he would say, "Oh! Mendelssohn, was it? I was not hearing that. I was thinking of something else." Why, the man had come to himself, under the sweet bewitchment of music. All his grosser feelings had gone down, because his finer feelings had gone up, and he was judging himself, and all his ambitions and desires, by a higher standard. He knew enough to do it, and God gave him a chance; and for an hour he came to himself, and was a better man.

Now, how can we carry this coming to ourselves so as to keep it, and cast it forward, and find it to-morrow, and the next day, and every day, and thus live in our real manhood, instead of below it, in our animal manhood, or falsehood?

I have seen many a man learn more at his cradle than he ever did from the pulpit. I have seen many a brave, strong man, who could face theology, and who, if you flashed arguments on him, was not hurt by them, any more than a house is damaged by the lightning which strikes the lightning-rod, and runs into the ground. But there came into his home a stealthy preacher, without notes. A little flower that he has cherished begins to wither—and you never know how much you love anything till it begins to go out of your hand. And this strong man, this wise man, this man that you could not reason with, nor do anything with, deliquesced like a cluster of grapes that lies under the vintner's crushing foot. All his spirit was like the juice that runs out. And at last the little bird ceased to sing. And the flowers lay around

only to be rebuked as not so sweet nor so beautiful as the one little pale face among them. And he took his little child down to say farewell to it; and came back home saying, all the way, inwardly, "Oh God! oh God! oh God!" And coming to the door, there was nothing there. And going into the house, he felt how hateful everything looked that used to look so beautiful. And he was angry if the servant happened to speak; and then was ashamed because he was angry. And he did not know what ailed him. All day and all night he said in himself, "What is this life worth? What is all my money worth? What is my honor worth? Oh! if I could get back that little child again, I would give everything I have in this world."

Is not that heart-sickness? Is not that the coming of a man to himself, and saying, "My joy does not depend upon my riches nor upon my honor, but upon love." Here was this little lover nestling in the man's bosom, and God loved it, and took it, and left the father bankrupt in his heart; and he bore testimony, "I cannot be fed in my soul with bread, nor honor, nor money; I must have something higher." Here was a man that came to himself for an hour, and stood in the royalty of his divine nature, and measured his life, and all things, by a higher standard, and rebuked himself, saying, "Thou art poor, and lean, and weak, and art perishing before the moth."

Oh! who would invest property in any direction in which he could be as easily bankrupted as a man can be in his heart? And yet, you put your heart's treasure in the keeping of a child, that is liable at any moment to stumble into death. At every step you put your heart, and all you have of higher enjoyment, into the keeping of chance, which to-day is like a bubble, and to-morrow is gone as the bubble is gone. And do you suppose men do not think of these things? They do think of them; but they do not know what the meaning of them is. I tell you, it is your true manhood sitting in judgment on your common life, and saying to every one of you, "You are living outside of yourself; you are not living as God made you to live, and as you yourself know that you ought to live. You are not good; you are but a little good; you are not half good; you are hardly beginning to be good"; and you feel it to be so.

It is a glorious discontent when a man is brought to that feeling provided it works in him reformation—for we have now reached that point in your consciousness in which I think you will see, not only that the Scripture doctrine of human sinfulness is borne out by facts, but that if we are to come out of that sinfulness, it must be by a transformation that may well be called *being born again*. If a man can turn himself upside down, so that the bottom shall be at the top, and the top shall be at the bottom; if a man can live so that his whole secular nature shall

be subordinated, and his whole spiritual nature shall be in the supremacy, is he not born again? And can a man come to that state unless it is given him by the spirit of God?

My dear friends, God is not jealous. He is just as willing as you are, and a great deal more willing than you are, that you should, if you can, become eminently holy without the aid of the Holy Spirit. If any one of you can rise up and change your reason, and moral sense, and selfish disposition, you have perfect liberty to do it. There is no jealousy on the part of God that should hinder you. There is no royal way that you must walk in order to come back to yourself and to him.

My child has in the cellar what he calls a little garden; and on going down there I find that he has set his tulip bulbs in a row in the sand, and lighted tallow candles and placed one over against each bulb. And I say, "Well, my son, what now?" "Oh," he says, "I am going to raise flowers." "But," I say, "you cannot bring flowers out by candle light. You must take your bulbs out of doors where they will have the sunlight, or you can get no flowers from them." "That may do for old folks, father," he says; "but I am going to raise tulips by candle light." "Well," I say, "I have no objection to your doing it if you can. Try it; and by and by, when you have found out whether you can do it or not, you will be willing to go out and avail yourself of the sunlight."

If you think you can bring out spiritual graces without the divine quickening you need not hesitate to try it. If you do not need the influence of that divine soul which is full of attraction, which is full of beauty and blessedness, and which is waiting above, and longing to help, you are at liberty to get along without it. If you have power in yourself which is sufficient for you, there is no reason why you should not use it. It would not be transcending your right, and it would not violate any part of the divine economy, nor hurt the feelings of your Father in heaven.

But ah, when you make your first essays, and try to live by the manhood, and not by the animalhood that is in you, I think there is not one single one of you that will not by and by come out humbled, and, like a little child, say, "O Lord God! I never can do this work. Inspire me; quicken me; change me; dwell in me: I think that then I can do it; but without Thee I can do nothing." I say to you that you may try a thousand times, but you never will come into a true manhood until the spirit of God helps you. You are too weak; you are too wicked; you are too ignorant; you are too strongly bound by habit. But there is that great daylight over your head. There is the great loving heart of God. Oh! that great love of God which sounds in the heaven as the ocean sounds upon the earth, that great love of

God which stretches abroad through the universe, as the air encompasses this whole globe—that is the secret power of this whole realm ; and it hungers for you, and waits for you.

Open your heart to this love. Confess your poverty, your selfishness, and your lowness of life. Ask God to lift you into your true manhood. He will hear your prayer, and will not wait till you come very near to him, before he comes to you.

And now I go back to the parable, and say, in closing, that when the prodigal first came to himself, he thought of his father, and his fatherland, and determined to go back and confess his wrong. And he made up his story. “I will go to my father,” he said, “and acknowledge my fault, and ask him to forgive me and take me again, and let me be his servant.” He started ; but he was not permitted to go clear back before he was welcomed. The father saw him afar off, and had compassion on him, and ran to meet him. Although the father was the one that was injured, although the father was right and the son was all wrong, it was the father that went and made the concession, as it were. And when the son began his confession, the father cut it in two, and called for the robe, and the sandals, and the ring, and the feast. And there was blessedness in that man’s heart. He had risen up out of animalhood into manhood ; he had come to himself ; his father had found him ; and he was indeed blessed.

Are there not some to-day who need this call from their God ? Are there not some to whom it will be welcome ? Are there not some who are on the way back from their wanderings and wickedness to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls ?

May God give his Holy Spirit to comfort you, and teach you, and sanctify you, that you may be born out of the old life of the flesh, and into the new life of the spirit ; and that finally you may reach your Father’s kingdom.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We render thanks to thee, our Heavenly Father, that we are not left to discern the truth as it shines in the face of nature. For above that which this world says, thou hast spoken to us, speaking by holy men of old; speaking chiefly by thy Son, Jesus, our Savior; and now, again, still interpreting and enlarging thy truth in our own experience; by the Holy Ghost guiding, sanctifying, and making manifest the things that belong to life. We thank thee that we are not of this world, as the flowers are that spring up, and perish, and are known no more. Rising higher than all things which thou hast made, we are destined for thy kingdom above. For us is a life beyond. We are emptied out of this life into a more glorious sphere—planted here; transplanted there; growing that we may grow better hereafter; prepared for our fruit; for all that endless expansion and glory of being which the eye hath not seen, which the ear hath not heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. And yet, how great is the way through which we are passing toward our own selves. We behold our manhood in the royalty of Christ. Thou, O Jesus, wert the only perfect man that the earth has ever seen. And though thou art God, thou art man. Now in thee we behold the stature of the perfectness of manhood. To that we aspire. Through passions, through temptations, through defilements, through darkness, through weakness, through mortal hindrances, we are pressing toward it. We have not reached it yet. We see it afar off. It goes down. As the lights sink when the ship is storm-tossed, so, often, our guiding star is lost. The light by which we steer is gone. And yet, it comes again. And through storm and through night we press forward, that we may reach this mark; that we may come to this prize; that we may inherit our high calling. We desire to be like thee; yet in this mortal state we shall never reach to that blessedness. Grant that we may at least find this, that thou art guiding and teaching and disciplining, that when we drop this mortal body we may rise and be blessed in thy presence forever more perfect.

And grant that we may have, all the way through life, a tender sense of thine interest in us; that thy Spirit is working in us; that we are not left to our own reason, nor to the convoying of our own judgment and experience. We are by thy good providence created, and guided; and by thy grace we are instructed and led. Grant that we may have comfort in believing that if in a sweet and childlike spirit we submit ourselves to thy leading, none of us shall fail; that through what way soever we may be carried, all ways shall end in the blessedness above. Grant that we may see the future more clearly than we do the present, and that we may feel the invisible more powerfully than we do the visible. Loosen our hold upon the things of this life. Grant that we may take firmer hold upon the things of the life that is to come. May we learn how to set our affections upon things above, and not upon things of the earth. Grant that that mind which was in thee may be in us; and that we may be filled with all gentleness, and lowliness, and humbleness of mind. Grant that we may live not only so as to be ourselves happy, but so as to diffuse happiness on every side. May our victories in our souls cheer others' conflicts of life. May our experience be a source of consolation and hope to those who are in a dubious way. May we be firm, not for ourselves alone, but for those who need some one to guide them. And we pray that we may commune together as we travel, in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, in sweet converse of the Lord's goodness to us, and in the hope of all the happiness that is to come. May we cheer the wilderness, and, though pilgrims, rejoice in the great goodness and mercy of our God.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt, this morning, suit thy kindness to the circumstances of all that are gathered here. Thou lookest within; and that which is shut to every outward eye is seen of thee—all sorrows, all fears, all sadness of heart. Be pleased to draw near to those who need thee to-day. Be light to them that are in darkness; be comfort to those that are in despondency. Thou knowest, O Lord, what are the wrestlings of the affection of parents in behalf of children, of children in behalf of parents, and of friends for friends. Holy are these conflicts, incited by thee, and full of disinterestedness. More like thyself are we when we strive, bearing each others burdens for one another's welfare, than in any estate that this world knows.

Grant, then, that all those who are troubled for others, may to-day find thy presence, the restfulness of thy Spirit, its strength, and its wisdom. May none, bearing their children in their arms to thee, go away saying, My Lord hath forgotten to be gracious. Grant, we beseech of thee, that those who are almost desponding, who have watched, and labored, and waited, and seen no answer, may take fresh hope, and be able to say, Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. To whom shall they come but unto thee? O Lord Jesus! may they never leave thee nor forsake thee. To thee may they come, and there may they abide. And believing thy promises, may they never cease, while life and breath shall last, to trust in thee.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw back any that are wandering, and reclaim them to better thoughts. And grant that to those that have been defiled, and are carried away from themselves, and away from honor and integrity, the way of return may not be made precipitous. Grant that we may remember those who are out of the way, even as thou didst; and that we may in our measure become merciful priests unto them, even as thou didst become a high priest touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and giving thyself for us, that we might be brought back to thee. May we not forget the lesson. May we seek to use all the force of life for the welfare of those around about us.

Be near to all those whose trouble is with themselves; who have conflicts with their passions, with their stormy tempers, with their obdurate pride; who know the better way, and seek to cover mountain sides where rocks are with the sweet growths of charity. Grant, we beseech of thee, O Lord, that they may have faith ministered to them; that they may have strength given to them, and above all things, divine influence—the indwelling of thy Spirit—that shall calm them. Thou that couldst quiet the storm—canst thou not quiet the unruly passions of the unrestful heart? We beseech of thee that thou wilt help every one that sees but a little, to keep the glimmer in his eye, and never look away, nor lose the guiding light.

Draw near to those who know themselves to be castaways, and fain would return, but are appalled at the greatness of the way, and of the difficulties to be overcome. O thou that didst give faith, comfort and cheer them, that they may have strength to take hold upon it. There is no help in themselves; they cannot rescue themselves; but thou canst be a deliverer to them, and thou canst bring them back. If they cannot themselves walk, thou canst, with everlasting strength, take them in thine arms, and bring them back; and we beseech of thee that thou wilt do it.

Are there not unanswered prayers? Are there not multitudes of prayers laid up, that yet shall break with blessings upon the heads of children, and those that are out of the way?

We beseech of thee that thou wilt teach us to be more tender-hearted one toward another, in honor preferring one another. Grant that we may set such examples before men in all things that they shall learn to love thee, and to glorify thy name.

We beseech of thee, that thou wilt spread the truth through all the community; that thou wilt teach men to love evil less; to delight less in the report of evil. Oh grant that men may rise up higher into honor, and love the things that are pure and noble, and just, and true, and right. And we pray that thou wilt help us to take stumbling-blocks out of each other's way, and put none therein. And may we all labor to make the Lord's highway a way prepared for the ransomed of the Lord to return thereon, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head.

And when we shall have served thee according to thy righteous will, when we shall have fulfilled all the duty that is apportioned to us in our feeble and limited life, grant that we may come to the hour of death with more joy than that with which children seek their couch at night. Grant that death may have no fears. May the night thereof come full of stars; and may we discern the morning just beyond, and hear the voices that call—even the voices of the Spirit and the Bride—saying, Come. And departing from this mortal sphere and all its imperfections, grant that we may rise, in the glory of the divine image, to claim our place, and be claimed, with the blessed welcome, Good and faithful servants enter into the joy of thy Lord.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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